



THE COUNTY OF KNOX
STATE OF ILLINOIS
Vice Chair and Board Member

DAVID AMOR
COUNTY BOARD DISTRICT 2

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Chairperson Elizabeth Hernandez
Redistricting Committee
102nd General Assembly
redistrictingcommittee@hds.ilga.gov

Dear Chairperson Hernandez:

I am writing on behalf of the citizens of the City of Galesburg to recommend reuniting the city within a single state senatorial district.

Although located amid the corn and soybeans of rural West-Central Illinois, Galesburg has a character and interests distinct from the rural areas and communities with which it currently shares political representation. Galesburg is a vibrant commercial, small-manufacturing and educational center with a long and proud history of diversity dating back to the city's founding and the Underground Railroad. Nearly 25% of the city's residents are people of color, a fact distinct from the vast majority of areas within its current electoral districts. It is situated on both Interstate Highway 74 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad (hosting transcontinental Amtrak service), and is home to two important colleges (the nationally ranked liberal arts Knox College and the nationally recognized community college leader Carl Sandburg College).

Since the last round of redistricting in 2011, the City of Galesburg has been divided among two state senate districts, the 37th and 47th (and two state house districts, the 74th and the 93rd). This division disadvantages the city and its residents in many ways. None of our representatives has a district office in Galesburg. The closest, Rep. Dan Swanson (74th), is 16 miles away, in Woodhull, while the district offices of Rep. Hammond and Senators Stoller and Tracy are all more than an hour away, in Peoria and Macomb. With our elected representatives located elsewhere and the district boundaries drawn to bisect the city, many residents are confused about who their representatives are, if they even have any idea.

The fact that Galesburg – the largest and economically most significant city in these districts outside of Quincy and Peoria (most of the latter is in another house and senate district) – is not home to any district office is a stark indication of how much the impact of the city and its residents is diminished in the eyes of its elected representatives. The collective interests of the city and the urban issues of concern to its citizens are distinct from those of the overwhelmingly rural and agricultural population that makes up the majority of these districts. Dividing the city

in this way virtually ensures that these interests and values are silenced at the ballot box and then of secondary importance to candidates elected in districts where Galesburg's votes are effectively halved in impact.

The division of the city also needlessly complicates the electoral process for both county political organizations, with the need to organize and support multiple candidate campaigns for all state house and senate elections, as well as making it more expensive. The result is a less effective use of volunteer and other resources in the campaign process. I believe that most Democrats and Republicans within Knox County would strongly support eliminating the current division.

The city and its residents deserve to be represented through a process where all their votes can have as full an impact as possible. Redistricting at the County level is governed by the principle that municipalities should be divided only when necessary (55 ILCS 5/2-3003). This principle should also govern decisions at the state level wherever possible. I urge the Senate Committee to reunite the City of Galesburg and bring it back into a single state senate district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Amor", written over a thin horizontal line.

David Amor
Vice Chair
Knox County Board